

ANACONDA CO. SMELTER SITE

QUESTION: What is the status of the consent decree negotiations and cleanup at the Anaconda Co. Smelter Superfund site?

ANSWER:

- EPA reached a conceptual settlement framework with the Atlantic Richfield Company, State of Montana, and Anaconda Deer Lodge County in October 2018, and expects to execute a signed consent decree by December 2019 to clean up the site and begin deletion in 2025.
- EPA is working with the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services, and Anaconda City-County Health Department on an exposure study that tested blood and urine samples from more than 300 volunteers from Anaconda. EPA is also evaluating garden produce from community members for potential site-related contamination.

BACKGROUND:

Remedial actions have been completed on over 80% of the site. Remaining work will be completed on the following OUs by 2025 under the currently negotiated Consent Decree.

- **OU 7 – Old Works/East Anaconda Development Area.** Cleanup is mostly complete on this OU, including the construction of a Jack Nicklaus designed golf course. While the cleanup provided for nearly 20 new businesses, remaining efforts will focus on redeveloping properties adjacent to the golf course.
- **OU 16 – Community Soils.** To date, over 1000 residential and commercial properties have been cleaned up. Under the Consent Decree an additional 1500 properties will be tested and cleanup where necessary. Institutional controls will also provide for interior and attic dust remediation.
- **OU 4 – Anaconda Regional Water, Waste and Soils.**
 - Cleanup is mostly complete for major waste source areas within the OU. This includes the Opportunity Ponds, where over 3500 acres of tailings have been capped and nearly 700 acres of new wetlands created; Smelter Hill and the Anaconda Ponds where another 1000 acres of the former facility have been capped. Remaining efforts will focus on the slag piles to prevent off-site migration while allowing the slag to be reused for industrial purposes.
 - For the remaining outlying areas of OU4, over 12,000 acres of mostly valley soil have been treated and reclaimed to date for the benefit of agriculture and wildlife. The remaining work will focus on the steeper upland areas to minimize contaminant loading to surface water.
 - Although surface water quality will be improved, it is likely that certain State standards will need to be waived. Additionally, ground water standards have already been waived within the site. A domestic well program currently tests and, if necessary, provides homeowners with RO treatment units or new wells.
- The community has expressed concerns about the protectiveness of the cleanup, especially in parks and schools. The current residential cleanup began in 2015. In 2017, EPA directed Atlantic Richfield to prioritize testing and cleanup of the community's parks and schools. Additionally, in 2018, EPA sampled the interior of schools and provided cleanup where necessary.

- In May 2018, the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) along with local and state partners conducted a community listening session to understand the community's health concerns. In July 2018, ATSDR returned to the community to provide their findings and announce that an exposure investigation will be conducted. The study will evaluate blood lead and urine arsenic and will be completed in 2019.

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